SKETCHES OF LINCOLN.

Nancy Hanks Passes Over the Dark River.

LITTLE ABE'S DISMAL EXPERIENCE.

Thomas Lincoln's Brief Widowerhood—He Marries Sally Bush Johnston—Two Sets of Children In the Lincoln Household. Abe at Dorsey's School.

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III.

In the fall of 1818 the scantily settled region in the vicinity of Pigeon creek, where the Lincolns were then living, suffered a visitation of that dread disease common in the west in early days and known in the vernacular of the frontier as "the milk sick." It hovered like a specter over the Pigeon creek settlement for over ten years, and its fatal visitation and inroads among the Lincolns, Hankses and Sparrows finally drove that contingent into Illinois. To this day the medical profession have never agreed upon any definite cause for the malady, nor have they in all their scientific wrangling determined exactly what the disease itself is.

Early in October of the year 1818 Thomas and Betsy Sparrow fell ill of the disease and died within a few days of each other. Thomas Lincoln performed the services of undertaker. With his whipsaw he cut out the lumber and with commendable promptness nailed together the rudest of coffins to inclose the forms of the dead. The bodies were borne to a scantily cleared knoll in the midst of the forest, and there, without ceremony, quietly let down into the grave. Meanwhile Abe's mother had also fallen a victim to the insidious disease. Her sufferings, however, were destined to be of brief duration. Within a week she, too, rested from her labors.

"She struggled on day by day," says one of the household, "a good Christian woman, and died on the seventh day after she was taken sick. Abe and his sister Sarah waited on their mother and did the little jobs and errands required of them. There was no physician nearer than 35 miles. The mother knew she was going to die and called the children to her bedside. She was very weak, and the children leaned over while she gave her last message. Placing her feeble hand on little Abe's head, she told him to be kind and good to his father and sister. To both she said, 'Be good to one another,' expressing a hope that they might live, as they had been taught by her, to love their kindred and worship God." Amid the miserable surroundings of a home in the wilderness Nancy Hanks passed across the dark river. Though of lowly birth, the victim of poverty and hard usage, she takes a place in history as the mother of a son who liberated a race of men. At her side stands another mother whose Son performed a similar service for all mankind 1,800 years before.

After the death of their mother little Abe and his sister Sarah began a dreary life—indeed one more cheerless and less inviting seldom falls to the lot of any child. In a log cabin without a floor, scantily protected from the severities of the weather, deprived of the comfort of a mother's love, they passed through a winter the most dismal either one ever experienced.

A Matter of Fact Courtship.

Thomas Lincoln's widowerhood was brief. He had scarcely mourned the death of his first wife a year until he reappeared in Kentucky at Elizabethtown in search of another. His admiration had centered for a second time on Sally Bush, the widow of Daniel Johnston, the jailer of Hardin county, who had died several years before of a disease known as the "cold plague." The tradition still kept alive in the Kentucky neighborhood is that Lincoln had been a suitor for the hand of the lady before his marriage to Nancy Hanks, but that she had rejected him for the hand of the more fortunate Johnston. However that may have been, it is certain that he began his campaign in earnest this time and after a brief siege won her heart. "He made a very short courtship," wrote Samuel Haycraft to me in a letter on Dec. 7, 1866. "He came to see her on the 1st of December, 1819, and in a straightforward manner told her that they had known each other from childhood. 'Miss Johnston,' said he, 'I have no wife and you no husband. I came a purpose to marry you. I knowed you from a gal, and you knowed me from a boy. I've no time to lose, and if you're willin let it be done straight off.' She replied that she could not marry him right off, as she had some little debts which she wanted to pay first. He replied, 'Give me a list of them.' He got the list and paid them that evening. Next morning I issued the license, and they were married within 60 yards of my house."

In the eyes of her spouse she could not be regarded as a poor widow. She was the owner of a goodly stock of furniture and household goods, bringing with her among other things a walnut bureau valued at $50. What effect the new family, their collection of furniture, cooking utensils and comfortable bedding, must have had on the astonished and motherless pair who from the door of Thomas Lincoln's forlorn cabin watched the well filled wagon as it came creaking through the woods can better be imagined than described.

Surely Sarah and Abe, as the stores of supplies were rolled in through the doorless doorways, must have believed that a golden future awaited them. The presence and smile of a motherly face in the cheerless cabin radiated sunshine into every neglected corner. If the Lincoln mansion did not in every respect correspond to the representations made by its owner to the new Mrs. Lincoln before marriage, the latter gave no expression of disappointment or even surprise. With true womanly courage and zeal she set resolutely to work to make right that which seemed wrong. Her husband was made to put a floor in the cabin, as well as to supply doors and windows. The cracks between the logs were plastered up. A clothespress filled the space between the chimney jam and the wall, and the mat of corn husks and leaves on which the children had slept gave way to the comfortable luxuriance of a feather bed. She washed the two orphans and fitted them out in clothes taken from the stores of her own. The work of renovation in and around the cabin continued until even Thomas Lincoln himself, under the general stimulus of the new wife's presence, caught the inspiration and developed signs of intense activity. The advent of Sarah Bush was certainly a red letter day for the Lincolns. She was not only industrious and thrifty, but gentle and affectionate, and her newly adopted children, for the first time perhaps, realized the benign influence of a mother's love. Of young Abe she was especially fond, and we have her testimony that her kindness and care for him were warmly and bountifully returned.

The two sets of children in the Lincoln household—to their credit be it said—lived together in perfect accord. Abe was in his tenth year, and his stepmother, awake to the importance of an education, made a way for him to attend school. To her he seemed full of promise, and although not so quick of comprehension as other boys, yet she believed in encouraging his every effort. He had had a few weeks of schooling under Riney and Hazel in Kentucky, but it is hardly probable that he could read. He certainly could not write.

Hazel Dorsey was Abe's first teacher in Indiana. He held forth a mile and a half from the Lincoln farm. The schoolhouse was built of round logs and was just high enough for a man to stand erect under the loft. The floor was of split logs, or what were called puncheons. The chimney was made of poles and clay, and the windows were made by cutting out parts of two logs, placing pieces of split boards a proper distance apart, and over the aperture thus formed pasting pieces of greased paper to admit light.

Abraham at School.

"He was always at school early," writes Grigsby, "and attended to his studies He was always at the head of his class and passed us rapidly in his studies. He lost no time at home, and when he was not at work was at his books. He kept up his studies on Sunday and carried his books with him to work so that he might read when he rested from labor."

Now and then, the family exchequer running low, it would be found necessary for the young rail splitter to stop school and either work with his father on the farm or render like service for the neighbors. These periods of work occurred so often and continued so long that all his school days added together would not make a year in the aggregate. When he attended school, his sister usually accompanied him. "Sally was a quick minded young woman," is the testimony of a schoolmate. She was more industrious than Abe in my opinion. I can hear her good humored laugh now. Like her brother, she could greet you kindly and put you at ease. She was really an intelligent woman.

At Dorsey's school Abe was 10 years old. At the next one, Andrew Crawford's, he was about 14, and at Swaney's he was in his seventeenth year. The last school required a walk of over four miles, and on account of the distance his attendance was not only irregular, but brief. Schoolmaster Crawford introduced a new feature in his school, and we can imagine its effect on his pupils, whose training had been limited to the social requirements of the backwoods settlement. It was instruction in manners. One scholar was required to go outside and re-enter the room as a lady or gentleman would enter a drawing room or parlor. Another scholar would receive the first party at the door and escort him or her about the room, making polite introductions to each person in the room. How the gaunt and clumsy Abe went through with this performance we shall probably never know. It his awkward movements gave rise to any amusement, his schoolmates never revealed it.

He was now over 6 feet high and was growing at a tremendous rate, for he added two inches more before the close of his seventeenth year, thus reaching the limit of his stature. He weighed in the region of 160 pounds, was wiry, vigorous and strong. His feet and hands were large, arms and legs long and in striking contrast with his slender trunk and small head. "His skin was shriveled and yellow," declares one of the girls who attended Crawford's school. "His shoes, when he had any, were low. He wore buckskin breeches, linsey woolsey shirt and a cap made of the skin of a squirrel or coon. His breeches were baggy and lacked by several inches meeting the tops of his shoes, thereby exposing his shinbone—sharp, blue and narrow."

In one branch of school learning he was a great success—that was spelling. We are indebted to Kate Roby, a pretty miss of 15, for an incident which illustrates alike his proficiency in orthography and his natural inclination to help another out of the mire. The word "defied" had been given out by Schoolmaster Crawford, but had been misspelled several times when it came Miss Roby's turn. "Abe stood on the opposite side of the room," related Miss Roby to me in 1865, "and was watching me. I began d-e-f, and then I stopped, hesitating whether to proceed with an 'i' or a 'y.' Looking up, I beheld Abe, with a grin covering his face and pointing with his index finger to his eye. I took the hint, spelled the word with an 'i,' and it went through all right."

He Taught Charity.

"God cares and humanity cares," Lincoln said, reflecting on the attitude of clergymen toward slavery, "and if they do not they surely have not read their Bible."

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Quarterly Temperance Lesson, April 21, 1895—Watchfulness—Matt. 24: 42-51.

[Specially Arranged from Peloubet's Notes.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Take ye heed, watch and pray.—Mark 13: 33.

THIS SECTION of our study includes the discourses of Jesus to His disciples Tuesday afternoon, after He had left the temple, on the way to Bethany over the Mount of Olives. Matthew chapters 24 and 25; and the parallels, Mark 13: 1-37; Luke 21: 5-36.

TIME.—Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A. D. 30. The same day, and soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—The Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem, on the way to Bethany.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES.—It was the Tuesday afternoon before the crucifixion. Jesus had spent most of the day in the temple courts in a final effort to persuade the rulers and the people to accept Him as the Messiah, and so save both themselves and the nation. Before He leaves, He pronounces the most solemn woes against them, not in a denunciatory manner, but as a statement of a fact and a warning. It was the cry of love itself, thrilled with tears. Leaving the temple, Jesus, with His disciples, viewed the massive foundations as they passed by, and as they climbed the heights of Olivet He looked into the future and saw all in ruins, not one stone left upon another. Then His prophetic eyes took a wider range into the future and saw the day of judgment, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was an awful type. Both arose from the same causes, because the people would not repent and believe. The destruction of Jerusalem bore the same relation to the Jews as the flood did to the antediluvians, which was emphatically the end of the world to them, and this was but "a miniature, on a much smaller scale," of the great last day.

AN APPLICATION TO TEMPERANCE.

The Need.—In the troublous times that precede the coming of Christ in His kingdom, the battle with intemperance has no small part. There are "wars and rumors of wars." There are "great tribulations" "and great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people."

A magazine of facts, from the National Temperance Almanac for 1894.

Direct cost of intoxicating liquors	$1,000,000,000
INDIRECT COST.	
Lost labor caused by drinking	440,000,000
Lost labor of liquor dealers	300,000,000
Sickness caused by liquor	100,000,000
Crime caused by liquor	37,500,000
Insanity caused by liquor	17,000,000
Pauperism caused by liquor	8,000,000
	$ 902,500,000

COMPARISONS.

Compare with this list of large expenditures the following table, showing what is spent in the United States for the ordinary necessities of life:

Bread	$505,000,000
Meat	30[illegible],000
Woolen goods	237,000,000
Cotton goods	210,000,000
Boots and shoes	196,000,000
Sugar and molasses	150,000,000

Young man! has not your eye been frequently attracted to a sign having the following ominous words on it: "Bar"? Avoid the place; it is no misnomer. The experience of thousands has proved it to be: A bar to respectability; a bar to honor; a bar to happiness; a bar to domestic felicity; a bar to Heaven.

Every day it proves to be the road to degradation; the road to vice; the road to the gambling hell; the road to the brothel; the road to poverty; the road to wretchedness; the road to want; the road to robbery; the road to prison; the road to the gallows; the road to the drunkard's grave; the road to hell.

The Horn of Plenty.—A brand of whisky is called "Horn of Plenty." On this a temperance writer remarks that they have chosen the name wisely, for out of the thing designated shall come

Plenty of poverty, plenty of pain.
Plenty of sorrow, plenty of shame.
Plenty of broken hearts, hopes doomed and sealed.
Plenty of graves in the potter's field.
—Loyal Legion.

How to Escape.—By Perpetual Watching—Against the enemies of temperance; against temptation; over the young; for opportunities. If we watch, temperance and all the train of virtues will rule over all the house, over ourselves, and over our country.

An English temperance orator, when speaking on the subject whether or not it would be possible to close the public drinking saloons, said: "This is a difficult question, truly, my friends; but we will do well to remember that:

There's a little public house which everyone may close;
It is the little public house just underneath the nose."

Linnæus said of alcohol that: "Man sinks gradually by this fell poison; first he favors it, then he warms to it, then he burns for it, then he is consumed by it."

The Consequences of Not Watching.—Destruction to ourselves, to our families and to our nation.

Much-Married Folk.

St. Jerome mentions a widow who had married her twenty-third husband, who, in his turn, had been married to twenty wives. A woman named Elizabeth Massi, who died at Florence in 1786, had been married to seven husbands, all of whom she outlived. She espoused the last at the mature age of sixty. When on her death-bed she recalled the good and bad points in each of her husbands, and, having impartially weighed them in the balance, she singled out her sixth spouse as her favorite, and desired that her remains might be interred near his. The death of a soldier is recorded in 1874 who had five wives, and his widow, aged ninety, wept over the grave of her fourth husband.

Precaution.

Her long silken lashes swept her cheek, but swept off nothing. "I confess," faltered the noble lord who was suing for her hand, "that I have been divorced three times and that I have eloped with an actress." She trembled. "But," she rejoined, as calmly as possible, "my happiness is at stake, and you are almost a stranger. Ought I not to ask even further evidence of your noble lineage and aristocratic connections?"—Detroit Tribune.

AUSTRALIA has invented the word "stateswoman" in order to describe a woman. Miss Flora Shaw spends her time writing and lecturing on colonial affairs, in doing which she blends the imperial and colonial views very skillfully. Her influence is strong, and she is knitting closely the relation of the mother country and the far-away daughter.

PETER denied Christ once, and wept forever after it. We often deny Him, and never weep for it at all.—St. Augustine.

LONDON has more than 10,000 professional musicians of various grades.

ADVENTURES OF A BOTTLE.

Cast Upon the Waters It Returned After Many Days.

In June, 1893, Lieut. H. T. Mayo, of the United States navy, in charge of the hydrographic office at Port Townsend, Wash., gave the captain of the Northern Pacific steamer Victoria a bottle which he asked him to drop into the sea when his ship was about halfway across the Pacific on its voyage to China, so as to test the currents. The bottle, says the Chicago Record, was securely corked and sealed and contained a request printed in seven different languages, including Russian, Chinese and Japanese, that whoever found it should send it to the nearest custom house in the United States, with the date and the location when and where it was first seen. On July 4, 1893, when the vessel was in latitude forty-nine degrees thirty-two minutes north and longitude one hundred and seventy-five degrees and forty-two minutes west, Second Officer Dobson, of the Victoria, took the bottle and with a swing of his long arm cast it into the water. One morning a few weeks ago when Lieut. Mayo came down to his office he found on his desk a package wrapped in an ancient and much soiled German newspaper, which, to his surprise, was found to contain the very bottle he sent on that queer errand about sixteen months before. The janitor said the package had been left there by two rough-looking sailors. Upon drawing the cork the lieutenant found a rude inscription upon the back of his carefully printed instructions which read:

"Here's your bottle. Found (on such and such a date, in such and such latitude and longitude). The next time you cast a bottle adrift please put something else in it besides a piece of paper."

GRECIAN ENTERPRISE.

Why the Fruit of Athens Is Always Too Green to Eat.

It is the way of travelers to complain of the food they are obliged to eat in foreign countries. Whether it is an American in Europe, or a European in America, the result is much the same. We like the things to which we are accustomed. When Edmond About was in Greece, he carried matters so far as to object to eating green peaches. He was in the bazaar at Athens, says the Youth's Companion.

"Wouldn't it be possible to get some ripe peaches?" he asked the vender.

"I think not," answered the Athenian.

"But pray tell me why?"

"We have no good roads. If the farmers should try to bring ripe fruit to market on mule-back, it would arrive in the shape of marmalade."

"But at Corfu, also, the peaches were green, and they have good roads, and bring the fruit to town in wagons."

"Ah, well," said the man, "there is another reason. The farmers have no money, and they have creditors. They can't wait for fruit to get ripe."

There, says About, you have a fair example of the state of Grecian agriculture.

A French gardener, being at Smyrna, noticed that the Greeks had almost no vegetables in their gardens—tomatoes everywhere, and scarcely anything else.

"Why don't you raise other things?" he asked. "Asparagus, now. Your soil is just right. You would make a fine thing of it. I will furnish you with seeds."

"How soon should we get crops?"

"In four years at the longest."

"Four years! Are you crazy? Do you suppose we would spend money to get something back in four years? We should be bankrupt twenty times over."

EVERYBODY IS SUPERSTITIOUS.

Point Argued by a Louisville Second-Hand Dealer Who Has Observed.

"I don't believe there is a man living who is without his pet superstition," remarked a second-hand furniture dealer, says the Louisville Courier-Journal. "We constantly have people who sell us articles of household use, and come in after a few weeks—sometimes only days—and try to buy them back again, with the explanation that they had 'had bad luck' ever since the sale was made and never would have good luck again until the bargain was undone. One woman who had sold us her grandmother's clock fairly wept because it was gone before she could buy it again.

"The idea is not confined to uneducated or ignorant people, by any means. At this very time I know a Louisville business man of great culture and refinement who is vigorously pursuing an old wooden desk which he owned many years ago—a desk on which he made an enormous amount of money by a few lucky strokes of his pen. The desk passed from hand to hand and out of his possession; he is now earnestly endeavoring to trace it and purchase it, believing that recent business reverses and hard times will flee away if he can only stretch his legs once more under that same old desk."

Mirrors That Are Transparent.

A great many devices are known for the purpose of enabling people in a house to see what is going on in the street without opening their windows. A new invention of this nature is reported from Halberstadt, Germany, being a plan for so silvering glass that it reflects the image when looked at from one side, but when looked at from the other is as transparent as ordinary window glass. If this is glazed in a dwelling-room window anyone inside can see all the life of the street, while any passer-by looking in at the window will see but a mirror and nothing more. This avoids, therefore, the annoyance sometimes encountered in glazing either clear window glass or ground glass, in combining the special advantages of both. One object would be that many people might stop to adjust their personal appearance at such mirrors. An innovation on reverse lines is that recently made in one of the Vanderbilt ball rooms, where the windows by day become large mirrors by night through mechanical arrangements, and thus add simply but wonderfully to the brilliance of the scene.